

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 00596 171910Z
ACTION H-03

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TAGS: OREP, ECON, EFIN, PFOR, SHUM, SOPN, PINT, HA
SUBJECT: CODEL BROOKE VISIT

1. SUMMARY: CODEL BROOKE TOOK MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OF BRIEF VISIT TO PORT AU PRINCE 15-16 FEBRUARY. HE CONVEYED HIS SYMPATHETIC INTEREST IN HAITIAN FUTURE TO IMPORTANT HAITIAN CROSS SECTION. TO GOVERNMENT, HE STRESSED NEED FOR PERFORMANCE IN MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IN HUMAN RIGHTS. HE PLANS TO UPDATE 1974 REPORT ON HAITI. END SUMMARY

2. CODEL BROOKE MET WITH CT FOR BRIEFING AND WITH SENIOR CABINET MINISTERS 15 FEBRUARY. FOLLOWING DAY HE BREAKFASTED WITH HAITIAN BUSINESSMEN AND SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH VOLAG REPS. HE MET SEPARATELY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BRUTUS, JUSTICE MINISTER JEANTY AND PRESIDENT DUVALIER. HE LUNCHEDED WITH INTERNATIONAL AND MAJOR BILATERAL DONOR AGENCY REPS.

3. SENATOR DEVELOPED SEVERAL THEMES TO GOVERNMENT AUDIENCE:

A. PUBLIC RELATIONS: HE POINTED OUT IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN U.S. SYSTEM, REFERRED TO ANTI-HAITI LOBBYISTS IN U.S. AS A FACTOR WHICH AFFECTED CONGRESSIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF GOH PERFORMANCE, AND ARGUED IMPORTANCE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOH TAKING INITIATIVE TO PRESENT FACTS TO MEDIA AND TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE INFORMATION SERVICE. PRESIDENT AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS APPEARED TO TAKE HIS COMMENTS SERIOUSLY BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THEY GRASP FULL MEASURE OF HAITI'S "IMAGE" PROBLEMS ABROAD OR ARE PREPARED TO TAKE THE KIND OF INITIATIVE WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED TO DEAL WITH THEM (E.G. CHANGES IN STAFFING AND

BUDGET OF INEPT INFORMATION AND COORDINATION MINISTRY).

B. HUMAN RIGHTS: SENATOR EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED MOVEMENT IN THIS AREA. HE OBTAINED ASSURANCES FROM PRESIDENT AND OTHER MINISTERS THAT PRESS LIBERALIZATION -- EXCLUDING EXTREMISM -- WOULD CONTINUE AND THAT POLITICAL PRISONER CONDITIONS WOULD IMPROVE. PRESIDENT REPORTED PLAN TO REPLACE FORT DIMANCHE WITH MORE MODERN FACILITIES.

C. REGIE DU TABAC: SENATOR LEARNED FROM MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO BAYARD THAT COMMISSION INVESTIGATING ASSETS OF REGIE WOULD SUBMIT ITS REPORT TO PRESIDENT END OF FEBRUARY AND OBTAINED ASSURANCES FROM PRESIDENT THAT LATTER PLANNED TO MAKE OUTLINES INTENTION TO INCREASE FISCALIZED REVENUES AS COUNTERPART FOR FOREIGN DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS.

D. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: COMMENTING ON INADEQUATE GOVERNMENT SALARIES AND CONSEQUENT POOR PERFORMANCE AND POOR MOTIVATION, SENATOR STRESSED NEED TO INCREASE SALARIES. FINANCE MINISTER BROUS SAID IMF OPPOSED SALARY INCREASES. GOVERNMENT CONSEQUENTLY HAD TO WAIT FOR NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE. PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGED NEED BUT SAID THAT MOST GOVERNMENT PREPARED TO DO NOW AS TO CHANGE LAW ON TAX DEDUCTIONS TO BENEFIT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

E. PEACE CORPS: SENATOR REMINDED PRESIDENT HE HAD PROPOSED PEACE CORPS IN 1974. IN ANSWER TO PRESIDENT'S QUESTION AS TO WHAT PEACE CORPS COULD DO FOR HAITI, SENATOR POINTED OUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN FIELDS OF IRRIGATION, PUBLIC HEALTH, ETC. PRESIDENT REMAINED RESERVED.

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4. SENATOR USED CONTACT WITH EMBASSY AND OTHER NON-GOH OFFICIALS TO UPDATE HIS KNOWLEDGE OF HAITI AND TO ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP SENSE OF CHANGE THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE HIS 1974 VISIT. ON BASIS HIS VISIT HERE, HE PLANS UPDATE HIS 1974 REPORT TO SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE.

5. COMMENT: AS PERCEIVED FRIEND OF HAITI AND RESPECTED MEMBER OF U.S. CONGRESS, SENATOR BROOKE RECEIVED EXCEPTIONALLY ATTENTIVE WELCOME. HE GOT HIS MESSAGE ACROSS EFFECTIVELY AND COURTEOUSLY, LEAVING ROOM FOR GOH TO RESPOND. SUBJECTS HE TOUCHED ON ARE RESISTANT TO CHANGE, DEEPLY ROOTED IN HAITI'S ISOLATIONIST PAST AND CENTRAL TO DUVALIER'S PROBLEM OF PRESERVING POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM WHILE INTRODUCING REFORMS. NEVERTHELESS, SENATOR'S FIRM, CONSTRUCTIVE AND INTELLIGENT ARGUMENTATION -- AND THE GOH KNOWLEDGE THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP DEVELOPMENTS IN HAITI UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY -- SHOULD STRENGTHEN FACTORS FOR CHANGE.

6. FOREGOING CLEARED IN DRAFT BY STAFFDEL ROSSITER.
ISHAM

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